

VZCZCXYZ0025
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHUP #0933 2671615
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 231615Z SEP 08
FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3411
INFO RUEHSL/AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA 1037
RUEHBM/AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST 1433

UNCLAS BUDAPEST 000933

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/NCE JAMIE LAMORE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [SOCI](#) [HU](#)

SUBJECT: BUDAPEST DEMONSTRATIONS - LESS VIOLENCE, BUT
EXTREMISM REMAINS

11. Summary. In a day of Budapest demonstrations September 20, approximately 4,000 supporters of the government's newly-organized Magyar Charta (Hungarian Charter) and 1,000 Roma peacefully carried their message of tolerance and inclusion through the streets of the Capital, culminating in a rally of approximately 5,000 at Parliament's Kossuth Square. In contrast, the far-right extremists groups, including the Jobbik Party and Magyar Garda, garnered approximately 500 supporters - far fewer than previous events - for a rally beginning at Heroes Square and ending in several violent clashes with police on their march to Szabadsag Square near the Embassy. End Summary.

12. Conceptualized by Prime Minister Gyurcsany this summer, Magyar Charta brought together more than 4,000 supporters for their first rally in the country. In front of Parliament, Gyurcsany called for a united stand against extreme right-wing radicals. Political analysts view the PM's Charta objectives as twofold: gaining popularity in the struggle against extremism and winning the support of his former SzDSz coalition partners on agreed-to ideological grounds despite public policy disagreements. Although SzDSz President Gabor Fodor declined to join the Magyar Charta, SzDSz Budapest Mayor Gabor Demszky spoke at the event, calling upon center-right opposition leaders to speak out against extremism, highlighting left-liberal political efforts to paint the center-right parties as soft on extremism.

13. Roma organizations from around the country arrived at Olympic Park near the Parliament with approximately 1000 supporters. Marching under heavy police escort, the group headed along the banks of the Danube - where they symbolically "cleansed" the far-right's symbolic Arpad Flag - joining the Magyar Charta supporters for the march to Parliament. In an unexpected show of support, many by-standers applauded as the Roma groups arrived at the Parliament.

14. At Heroes Square, a small crowd of approximately 500 Magyar Garda and Jobbik supporters - in contrast to previous events attended by 1,200-1,500 - listened to Jobbik Party President Gabor Vona, Jobbik MEP candidate Krisztina Morvai, 64 County Movement President Laszlo Toroczka and Gyorgy Budahazy deliver their inflammatory speeches. In a closing harangue, Budahazy - calling himself "a warrior and not a politician...collecting fighters rather than votes" - warned that "if we have enough fighters there will be no mercy for the liberal-Bolshevik-Zionists groups who destroyed our country. They had mercy in 1990 but they abused it...they should not demonstrate against us but they should rather start thinking about where to hide from us. The victory might not come today, but it will one day for sure." Emboldened, the group headed to Szabadsag Ter where they attempted to place shoes in memory of the victims of communism and "gypsy crime" at the Soviet monument commemorating Budapest's liberation from the Germans in WWII.

The police countered the protesters' stones and flares with tear gas and water cannons to break-up several small clashes in the surrounding streets, arresting 15.

Foley